

ARTS / GALLERIES

With Its Rival Gone, the Texas Contemporary Art Fair Returns One Year After Harvey Heartbreak

It Comes Back as Houston's Strongest Art Fair Yet

BY CATHERINE D. ANSPON // 10.02.18



Gabi Trinkaus' "ADDI," 2018, at Claire Oliver Gallery

Fairs can lift an entire art community, energizing the artists, collectors, curators, and gallerists — as well as the curious, especially those with pockets and interests that align with the critical mass of a fair and its often dazzling private tours, parties galore and cool educational components.

Houston is welcoming the seventh edition of Texas Contemporary Art Fair this week, and hopes run high. Presented by Brooklyn-based Art Market Productions — whose portfolio includes the Seattle Art Fair, backed by Microsoft big daddy **Paul G. Allen** — expectations abound around what promises to be the most robust (in terms of exhibitor numbers) year of the Texas Contemporary to date.

While **Hurricane Harvey** prevented last year's fair, that cancellation provided an opportunity for a reset. The show is **Thursday through Sunday, October 4 through 7, at George R. Brown Convention Center**, for the first time ever without a competing fair. The once rival Houston Fine Art Fair is no more — nor thankfully will our museum types and collectors be fractured or forced to dash across town to see and be seen at two different fairs on opening night.

Texas Contemporary director Kelly Freeman says there's been exceptional interest in exhibiting in Houston from galleries across the United States, Europe, and Asia. The complete exhibitor list is still in formation, but Freeman says it could go as high as 75 dealers.

“ATTENDANCE IS EXPECTED TO CRESCENDO FOR OPENING NIGHT, WITH MORE THAN A 1,000 ART LOVERS SET TO ATTEND, WHILE 10,000 PEOPLE ARE EXPECTED TO FLOCK TO GEORGE R. BROWN FOR THE FAIR OVER THE WEEKEND.

Matt Johns, art-smart event and content producer, returns to orchestrate VIP surprises. Pay close attention to the VIP Lounge, where Johns has tapped BeDesign in collaboration with Contour Interior Design to create a captivating design-plus-art experience.

Insider tip: Acquire a Preview Pass and partake in Opening Night on Thursday, October 4 from 6 to 10 pm, including a first-look cocktail party. Attendance is de rigeur for serious collectors. The \$150 ticket, as always, benefits Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Texas Contemporary's long-term museum partner.

Notable National Artists

Gallerists from around the country are putting chips on the Texas Contemporary. Peruse **Miró** and **Albers** lithographs at heritage Manhattan dealer **ACA Galleries**, as well as paintings by American rocker **John Mellencamp**.

At **Claire Oliver Gallery**, **Gabi Trinkaus'** very-now collages probe identity politics — the artist's feminist outcries are formed from cut magazine clippings upon canvas.

At Canadian **Stella Ripley**, the street-art-influenced spray-painted panels by **Melisa Taylor Metzger** remind us that high and low can happily dialogue.

New York-headquartered **Uprise Art** — known as a disruptor of the traditional art economy for its online platform — exhibits for the first time in Houston. Our pick from Uprise's stable is **Ward Roberts'** nuanced photography of architecture and place, which pays tribute to abstraction.

L.A. darling **Chimento Contemporary** brings the highly regarded **Monique Prieto**, a museum-collected West Coast painter who is among the best of her generation for melding biomorphic and color-field abstraction.

And from Denver, **Robischon** arrives, home to sculptor **Judy Pfaff** and grande dame installationist **Ann Hamilton**.

Power NYC gallerist **ZieherSmith** is also in the lineup.